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Recreation Commission Minutes 2/09/2010

Park and Recreation Commission
Minutes
Tuesday, February 09, 2010
Approved

The Park and Recreation Commission came to order at 7:00 PM on the first floor of the Arlington Senior Center on Tuesday, February 09, 2010.

Members in attendance included: Leslie Mayer, Jen Rothenberg, Nancy Campbell, Jim Robillard and Don Vitters. Also in attendance was Director of Recreation Joseph Connelly.

Members of the public included: Town Manager, Brian Sullivan and Mustafa Varoglu.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Vitters motioned to approve the January 12, 2010 minutes, seconded by Ms. Rothenberg, and approved 3-0-2 with Mr. Robillard and Ms. Campbell abstaining.

Thompson School/North Union Park Discussion with Town Manager

Town Manager, Brian Sullivan, reviewed the situation with the renovation/reconstruction of the Thompson Elementary School. Mr. Sullivan reviewed the process and status with the SBAB. Mr. Sullivan indicated that he would like to start the potential land swap process now between school and town park land so that there will be fewer delays down the road.

Mr. Sullivan explained that one of the potential options was to place the new school on existing park land and then upon completion of the school transfer school land to park land. Mr. Sullivan indicated that this process involved approval from the Commission, Town Meeting and the State Legislature.

The Commission discussed project funding and the process with Mr. Sullivan. Mr. Sullivan indicated funding for restoration of the parkland and recreation facilities would be part of the school renovation project and would not have to be integrated into the Commission's 10-year capital plan or impact existing planned projects. Mr. Vitters and Ms. Mayer indicated that they would like to see some potential plans on how the site would be laid out. Mr. Sullivan stated that this would take place within the feasibility study. Ms. Mayer shared her concerns with the school department regarding past school renovation projects and their neglecting the recreational aspects in the planning. Mr. Sullivan suggested that certain safeguards and contingencies could be in place to protect the Commission's interests.

The Commission and Mr. Sullivan again discussed the timing of the project and the pertinent approvals to determine the urgency of a Commission vote. Ms. Mayer stated that the Commission could convene at any time to vote if necessary.

Mr. Connelly suggested the Park Commission have an active role in the feasibility process so that the types of recreational facilities needed would be taken into consideration with the initial design. Mr. Connelly stated for example a 60' diamond baseball field might fit better into the plan but would not meet the recreational needs of the community that a 90' diamond would meet.

The Commission requested a time line from Mr. Sullivan and more information on the potential design, preliminary cost analysis for demolishing the existing school building and building equivalent park/recreation facilities within the swapped location, along with a plan for funding and any legal protections that could be drafted by Town Counsel.

Buck Field Warrant Articles

Mr. Connelly reviewed the different warrant articles associated with recreation and Buck Field. The Commission reviewed and discussed the articles. Mr. Connelly indicated that he is working with the Arlington Police to review complaints related to the use of Buck Field. The Commission asked Mr. Connelly to make sure he was aware of when these articles would be discussed by the Selectmen at their warrant review hearings and draft responses to the articles that could be reviewed by the Park Commission

Arlington Sport Center Renovation Review

Mr. Connelly and Mr. Vitters reviewed the mandatory walk through of the facility for the bid. Mr. Connelly stated that as of now everything seemed to be going well and that the final bids were due on March 1st. Ms. Rothenberg asked if the renovation project would be impacting the field and playground use. Mr. Connelly indicated that he believed some of the parking area may be compromised but he did not feel the fields would be affected.

Request to Privately Raise Funds for Arlington Sports Center Locker Room Expansion

Mr. Connelly reviewed the request from Mr. Dolan and the Ed Burns Veterans' Memorial Rink Committee to allow the private group to explore the option to add four locker rooms to the facility and name the facility for former AHS Hockey Coach Ed Burns. The Commission discussed the request and felt that it would be a positive way to move forward, as long as it is done within the context of the approved master plan for the Sports Center. The Commission wanted it made clear that the locker rooms would also be used by other groups when not in use by the high schools. The Commission also asked Mr. Connelly to make it clear that they are not giving any opinion on the renaming of the facility at this time. Mr. Connelly stated that he would convey the message and that this proposal does assist the department with phase two of the master plan. Mr. Connelly described phase two and stated that this could be a phase two part one proposal.

Mr. Connelly stated that he has contacted Sasaki, who completed the master plan for the Town, to give the private group a price to establish a more detailed plan and cost estimates. The private group would be responsible for all costs associated with feasibility, design and construction, with each phase subject to approval of the Commission.

Mr. Robillard motioned to approve the request to explore options to add an additional four locker rooms to the facility that could be used by male and female hockey programs in Arlington. The motion included that the funding would be privately raised and that the Commission takes no position on the renaming of the facility at this time. The motion was seconded by Ms. Rothenberg and approved 4-0-1 with Mr. Vitters abstaining.

Special Event Approvals

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Mr. Connelly indicated that there were no requests at this time.

Capital Improvement Update

Thorndike Parking - Out to Bid

Summer Street Playground – Bid Package being prepared.
North Union Basketball Court – Temporarily on hold.

Request for additional playground fencing for Magnolia, Crosby and Parallel – Tabled until a later meeting

Rink and Recreation Update

Mr. Connelly stated that all indications are that this skating season was a smooth and successful one. Ms. Mayer and Mr.

Connelly stated that if it were not for the Zamboni issues the season would have been issue free. Mr. Connelly did discuss the situation with public skating and the skateguards doing their jobs. Mr. Connelly stated that Mr. Cunningham and himself both addressed the issue and have seen some small improvements.

Mr. Connelly reviewed the preliminary numbers for the winter programming. Mr. Connelly stated that it looks like the winter numbers will be up from last year due to the overwhelming success of the Bay State Skating program. Mr. Connelly complimented the work of Program Coordinator Dan McGrath and attributed much of the success of the programs to his efforts. The Commission agreed that Mr. McGrath has been a very positive addition to the department and has a wonderful rapport with program participants.

Park Policies & Committee Updates

Amplification System – This will be reviewed with the field users at the February 25th meeting, along with the Storage Shed policy and amendments to the Field Permit Policy for lighted fields.

Portable Restrooms – Ms. Rothenberg stated the meeting was this Thursday to begin the review process.

Dog Park Task Force – Ms. Mayer reviewed the first meeting of the Task Force, which will be limited to exploring options for fenced off-leash areas for recommendation to the Commission, Town Manager and Selectmen.

Open Space - Ms. Mayer stated that the Open Space Committee was doing some preliminary updating to the Open Space Plan to extend its expiration date two years into 2014.

Other

Mr. Robillard motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Vitters and approved 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 9:35 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:

Joseph Connelly, Director of Recreation